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REMARKS

This Response is offered in reply to the office action of April 2, 2003.

Applicants affirm their election to prosecute the Group I claims 1-6 and reserve the right to prosecute the Group II claims 7-11 at a later date by of divisional application or other means.

In response to paragraphs 3-5, Applicants enclose a Letter To Official Draftsperson to amend Figure 2 to change "8a" to --18a-- which is referred to on page 12 of the specification. Applicants also have amended page 12, line 4 to change reference numeral "26" to --18--. These drawing and specification amendments are believed to overcome the objections to the drawings. Reconsideration is requested.

In response to paragraph 6 of the office action, Applicants have amended claims 1 and 6 in a manner believed to overcome the Section 112 rejection of claims 1-6. Reconsideration of the rejection is requested.

In paragraph 7 of the office action, claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 US 103(a) as obvious in view of the Baldi US Patent 3 764 371 taken with the Disclosed Prior Art.

Claim 1 has been amended to better explain that the recited gas generator is disposed external of a coating retort and includes the recited generator components to this end. In contrast, the Baldi patent discloses an outer retort 12 having inner retorts 51, 52, 52 therein, each inner retort including a chromium diffusion pack (powder) in which the jet engine deflector rings are embedded such that the chromium diffusion packs each provides the coating material for the deflector rings embedded therein in a manner not suggesting Applicants' gas generator of pending claims 1-4 and instead in a manner teaching away therefrom.

Reconsideration of the Section 103 rejection of claim 1-4 is requested.

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In paragraph 8 of the office action, claims 1 and 4 are rejected under 35 US 103(a) as obvious in view of the Sarin US Patent 4 890 574 taken with the Disclosed Prior Art and the Baldi patent.

In contrast to Applicants' pending claims 1 and 4, the Sarin patent discloses an internal reactor 8 or 8a residing in a reaction chamber 3 located inside a reactor dome 2 such that the internal reactor 8 or 8a receives a precursor gas in tube 10 to generate a halide coating gas in a manner not suggesting Applicants' gas generator of pending claims 1 and 4 and instead in a manner teaching away therefrom. Moreover, in contrast to Applicants' invention, the Sarin patent purposefully introduces an oxygen bearing gas in tube 12 so that oxides are formed in the reaction chamber 3. The examiner speculates that the rectangular element of Figure 2 is an airtight seal as set forth in Applicants' claims. However, Applicants have already pointed out that the Sarin reactor 8 or 8a resides inside reaction chamber 3 and that an oxygen bearing gas is introduced via tube 12 such that the alleged purpose of the rectangular element as an airtight seal is in doubt and not supported by the patent itself.

The Baldi patent is as deficient as the Sarin patent in disclosing to locate the chromium diffusion packs in the inner retort 51, 52, 53. The Baldi patent adds nothing to the Sarin patent with respect to features of Applicants' claimed gas generator disposed external of a coating retort.

Reconsideration of the Section 103 rejection claims 1 and 4 is requested.

In paragraph 9 of the office action, claims 5 and 6 are rejected under 35 US 103(a) as obvious in view of the Sarin US Patent 4 890 574 taken with the Disclosed Prior Art, the Baldi patent and also the Tom US Patent 5 531 971.

The deficiencies of the Sarin and Baldi patents are pointed out above. The Tom patent adds nothing to the Sarin and Baldi patents with respect to features of Applicants' claimed gas generator disposed external of a coating retort. There is no reason or motivation to combine the Tom patent with the Sarin patent, which involves an internal reactor 8 or 8a, or the Baldi patent, which involves diffusion packs in inner retorts 51, 52, 52. The only basis for the combination proposed by the examiner must be based on a hindsight analysis of the claimed invention, given the contrary teachings of the Sarin and Baldi patents.

With respect to claim 6, the examiner refers to Sarin's plate 22. However, the examiner will note that the plate 22 is not disposed downstream of a flange as recited in Applicants' claims.

Reconsideration of the Section 103 rejection of claims 5 and 6 is requested.

Applicants have added new claim 12 which recites that the metallic charge includes at least one of Si and a reactive metal selected from the group consisting of Hf, Zr, Y, Ce, La, and Mg that are not remotely disclosed or suggested in the cited references. No fee is due for new claim 12.

Applicants believe the pending claims are in allowable condition, and action to that end is requested.

Applicants enclose a supplemental IDS for the examiner's consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



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enclosure: letter To Official Draftsperson, IDS, and Postal card